Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy – Candler School of Theology

Federal regulations require that students, who receive (or apply for) student aid, maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to remain eligible for aid. These qualitative (Grade Point Average: GPA) and quantitative (time to degree completion and percentage of courses passed) performance standards are officially evaluated, by Emory University’s Office of Financial Aid, at the end of each term for a program that is designed to be completed in one calendar year or less, or at the end of an academic year for a program that is greater than a calendar year in length. The qualitative and quantitative standards that must be met, will differ from program to program and will be specified below.

Qualitative SAP standards - GPA:

- Master of Divinity: Must maintain a 2.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Master of Theological Study: Must maintain a 2.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Master of Religious Leadership: Must maintain a 2.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Master of Theology: Must maintain a 3.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 3.0 cumulative GPA.
- Master of Religion and Public Life: Must maintain a 2.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 2.0 cumulative GPA.
- Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling: Must maintain a 3.0 current GPA each semester and an overall 3.0 cumulative GPA.
- Doctor of Ministry: All courses are taken on a pass/fail grading basis, and students receiving Unsatisfactory grades will receive a one term warning. Students receiving Unsatisfactory grades in two consecutive semesters will be disqualified from receiving aid.

Quantitative SAP standards – Length of Program and Rate of Completion (Pace):

All students are expected to complete their degree programs within a maximum time frame. The maximum time frame for graduate students is 150% of the hours required to complete their degree program. Time to degree completion is calculated for all credit hours for which the student enrolls or receives credit at Emory and any of the following grades are assigned: DS, HP, PS, LP, NC, Satisfactory
and Unsatisfactory. A course assigned an Incomplete (I), In Progress (IP), or Withdrawal (W) is also counted toward attempted credits. Audited classes are not considered attempted credits. The total number of credits attempted is not the only quantitative SAP standard that is evaluated.

Pace, or Rate of Completion, is also a SAP standard that is evaluated: determined by dividing the number of credits earned, by the number of credits attempted. A student must maintain a 66.67% minimum Rate of Completion (the equivalent of successfully completing 2 of every 3 credits attempted).

Should a student reach a point where it is no longer mathematically possible to complete their degree requirements without exceeding the maximum attempted credits allowed, they will become ineligible for aid at that point.

- Master of Divinity: 126 maximum attempted credit hours based on an 84 credit hour degree requirement.
- Master of Theological Study: 72 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 48 credit hour degree requirement.
- Master of Religious Leadership: 72 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 48 credit hour degree requirement.
- Master of Theology: 36 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 24 credit hour degree requirement.
- Master of Religion and Public Life: 45 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 30 credit hour degree requirement.
- Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling: 75 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 50 credit hour degree requirement.
- Doctor of Ministry: 47 maximum attempted credit hours based on a 31 credit hour degree requirement.

**Special Courses:**
Contextual Education, Chapel Choir, Candler Singers, Emory Concert Choir, Ministry Internship, Clinical Pastoral Education, Teaching Parish, Atlanta Theological Association cross-registration, Directed Study, Thesis, transfer credit, and summer courses are all included in the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculations.
Monitoring Eligibility: Disqualification, and Conditions of Reinstatement

Official SAP evaluations will be conducted, by Emory University’s Office of Financial Aid, at the end of each term for a program that is designed to be completed in one calendar year or less, or at the end of an academic year for a program that is greater than a calendar year in length. Students who do not meet SAP standards will be disqualified from receiving future financial aid: students in one-year programs will receive an official Warning semester, prior to being disqualified. If a student becomes ineligible for student aid (as a result of not meeting SAP), they may regain eligibility in two ways:

1) **Improve academic performance** to a level that meets all SAP requirements. Should a student resume performing at, or above, the minimum SAP requirements, they will need to notify their Financial Aid Advisor and request that their aid to be processed.

2) **Submitting a SAP Appeal that gets approved.** Students, who appeal successfully, will be placed on **Probation** (where a student is allowed one term to improve performance to meet SAP standards), or on a probationary **Academic Plan** (where a student is allowed more than one term to improve performance as long as they meet the conditions of the plan throughout the duration). During the probationary period students are conditionally eligible for financial aid. Students on probation must receive a term GPA of at least the minimum cumulative GPA required by their program, and are not permitted to receive grades of F, U, W, WF, WU, I, IF, or IU.

Students who are meeting SAP standards at the conclusion of their probationary period, will have their financial aid reinstated unconditionally for the next award term. Students who are unable to meet the conditions of their SAP probation, will have their access to aid, at Emory College, suspended indefinitely.

The act of submitting a SAP appeal does not guarantee approval, nor does it grant temporary reinstatement of eligibility: as a result, a student is responsible for any charges incurred regardless of the result of the appeal.

**SAP Appeals**

An appeal for extenuating circumstances should be submitted prior to the first day of class for the semester the student is seeking reinstatement, to mitigate the financial risk of not being approved. Failure to submit a complete appeal prior to the first day of class, may result in the appeal being considered for the subsequent future semester.

A Satisfactory Academic Progress **Appeal Form** should be submitted with supporting documentation of any mitigating circumstances that negatively impacted a student’s ability to meet SAP standards.

Generally, the Office of Financial Aid will only approve one appeal per academic degree. This policy may be waived on a case-by-case basis where extenuating circumstances can be documented.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

Satisfactory Academic Progress is the process in which the University evaluates the academic progress of financial aid applicants or recipients. There are academic (SAP) standards that a student must meet to maintain financial aid eligibility.

2. How is Satisfactory Academic Progress measured?

There are qualitative and quantitative measurements. The qualitative measurement consists of current and cumulative grade point averages. The quantitative component consists of attempted credit hours and completion rate.

3. How often is Satisfactory Academic Progress calculated?

Satisfactory Academic Progress is calculated at the end of each term for a program that is designed to be completed in one calendar year or less, or at the end of an academic year for a program that is greater than a calendar year in length.

4. Are summer classes included in the calculation for attempted credits?

Yes: all attempted credits, including those credits attempted in a summer semester, are included in the calculation for GPA and attempted hours.

5. How do Advanced Placement, Transfers, Study Aboard, or CLEP credits affect my academic progress calculation?

Any credits that are accepted toward your degree are included in the determination of attempted credits.

6. What happens if I withdraw from a class? Are W’s included as “attempted” in the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculation?

Yes: withdrawal from a class(es), regardless of the reason, will be counted in the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculation as attempted hours.
7. What if I have been granted Academic Amnesty or Relief for a semester(s)?

All classes that were attempted toward the pursuit of a degree are included in the SAP determination of attempted credits, regardless if they have been exempted from GPA calculations under Academic Amnesty or Relief.

8. I have received a SAP alert email from the Office of Financial Aid regarding my Satisfactory Academic Progress status. What should I do?

This email is provided to students who may be in danger of falling below minimum standards. Students may wish to review their course or program plans with their academic advisor after becoming familiar with the policies for continuation.

9. I have been notified by the Office of Financial Aid that I have been disqualified because my academic record does not meet minimum standards. What options do I have?

You may submit an appeal which details your circumstances and addresses a corrective action plan. Please refer to the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal Form for additional details on this process.

10. What is a probationary Academic Plan?

When considering your appeal, it may be determined that it will require successive terms of academic success to reach SAP minimum standards. The Academic Plan will specify the number of terms you will be allowed to receive aid during your attempt to reach minimum standards.